

Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Palos Verdes and Malibu Democratic Clubs
2014

Thank you for inviting me to be with you today.

As you know, I'm retiring from Congress at the end of this year after 40 years. As I see friends here and reflect on my career, I am filled with gratitude.

I am grateful to you for entrusting me to represent you and for giving me an opportunity to be a leader on national and international issues.

I am grateful for the opportunity to work with you to fight for issues we care about: health care, environmental protection, consumer protection, women's and gay rights, and strengthening the ties between the United States and our ally, Israel.

I first ran for office because I believe government can be a force for good in people's lives. I have held this view throughout my career in Congress. We know that special interests have advocates in Washington. It's the poor, the sick, and the powerless who need a champion in Congress. And that's what I have strived to be.

I take pride in my legislative accomplishments, almost all of which were enacted with strong bipartisan support.

Legislative Achievements:

Waxman-Hatch Generic Drug Act, which created the generic drug industry, saving families more than \$1 trillion in the last decade alone.

The Orphan Drug Act, which gave drug companies incentives to develop treatments for rare diseases, which they previously ignored.

The Ryan White CARE Act, which provides medical care and other services to Americans living with HIV/AIDS.

The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, which restricted the marketing of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco to children and gave the Food and Drug Administration jurisdiction over tobacco products.

The Nutrition Labeling Act, which mandated the popular nutrition labels that consumers rely upon to compare packaged foods.

The Food Quality Protection Act, which established a strong health-based standard for pesticide residues in food.

The Food Safety Modernization Act, which sets science-based standards for the safe production and harvesting of raw agricultural commodities and requires new preventative controls for companies that process or package foods.

Medicaid. In the 1980s I led the fight to expand Medicaid, providing health coverage to millions of low-income children, pregnant women, and seniors.

CHIP. In the 1990s, I worked with Senator Ted Kennedy to provide health coverage to the children of working families through the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Affordable Care Act. In 2010, when I was chair of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, one of my lifelong dreams was finally achieved: Congress passed the Affordable Care Act, which guarantees access to affordable health coverage to all Americans.

1990 Clean Air Act Amendments, which established new programs to reduce urban smog, hazardous air pollution, acid rain, and prevent the depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer.

Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments, which strengthened the standards for drinking water and established funding mechanisms for drinking water infrastructure improvements.

Laws Reducing Childhood Lead Exposure, including laws removing lead from plumbing supplies, water coolers, and children's toys, requiring disclosure of lead hazards during real estate transactions, and setting standards for safe renovations.

Climate Change -- Most recently, I have led the fight in Congress for limits on carbon pollution that is causing global climate change. When I was chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee in 2009, I was able to get a climate bill passed in the House, but the Senate didn't act. So, last Congress, I formed a Safe Climate Caucus in the House and a Bicameral Task Force with Senator Sheldon Whitehouse to build public support for climate change legislation.

Congressional Oversight -- Congress serves an important role through oversight. Investigations I led on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee identified billions of abuses of taxpayer dollars, especially in Iraq. We also held hearings to reveal the causes of the mortgage meltdown and Wall Street crash.

Israel -- I have worked my entire career to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Forty years is far longer than I ever expected to serve in Congress. And, while I plan to stay active in issues important to our nation, it's time for me to give someone else a chance -- ideally someone young enough to make the same long-term commitment required for real legislative success. I have enjoyed every day I've been in Congress and I will always be grateful to you for giving me this honor and privilege.